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DATE: September 25, 2012
TO: The House Oversight, Reform and Ethics Committee
FROM: Karole L. White, President/CEO, Michigan Association of Broadcasters
RE: House Bill 5895

Dear Chairman McMillin and Members of the House Oversight, Reform and Ethics Committee,

Thank you for scheduling a committee hearing on House Bill 5895. Michigan Association of Broadcasters supports this legislation as drafted.

Michigan Association of Broadcasters represents 389 radio and television stations, most of which have active news and investigative departments serving nearly every citizen in our state.

Government transparency is the top-most priority for the broadcasters. Access to public records, government meetings and other public information is critical in allowing broadcasters to do their job and fulfill their primary obligation - to keep the public informed.

Media has traditionally served as a government watch dog and House Bill 5895 recognizes this important role by creating the Open Government Commission.

In the recent study by the Center for Public Integrity, Global Integrity and Public Radio International (www.stateintegrity.org), Michigan was graded 'F' for numerous failures of transparency and accountability. Our state ranked 44th out of 50 for public access to information, executive, legislative and judicial accountability and political financing information. Findings like these underscore the importance of legislation like House Bill 5895.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 5895.

Sincerely,

Karole L. White
President/CEO
Michigan Association of Broadcasters